

Weatherization Makes Headlines in Connecticut

Home to 144 circulating newspapers, Connecticut recognizes a good news story. The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program (Weatherization) is good news for individuals and communities in Connecticut. Weatherization reduces energy costs for low-income families by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes, while ensuring their health and safety. Connecticut's Department of Social Services partners with DOE to implement the program and five local agencies deliver weatherization services to eligible residents throughout the state.

Low-income families shoulder a disproportionate energy burden. They typically spend 14% of their annual income on energy, compared with 3.5% for other households. This burden becomes more pronounced when energy prices soar or temperatures plummet. Weatherization reduces this burden by lowering home energy consumption, which provides a permanent boost to the household's budget.

TECHNOLOGY TOPS THE NEWS

The *Hartford Courant* is the oldest U.S. newspaper in circulation. When the paper was established in 1874, it was released sporadically due to the time-consuming printing process. Today, the newspaper relies on advanced technology to publish its daily edition. Similarly, Connecticut's Weatherization Program has evolved into a sophisticated program with professionally trained crews who use advanced technologies to make homes more energy-efficient.

Weatherization crews use a computerized energy audit to determine the most cost-effective measures for each home. Diagnostic tools like blower doors are used to detect and mitigate air infiltration and pressure imbalances in the home. Crews also perform health and safety tests on appliances and heating systems.

NATIONAL WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM

Homes weatherized in 1999	68,000
DOE allocations in 1999	\$135 million
Average annual energy cost savings per household	\$300
Average space heating savings	25-30%
Energy benefits returned for every \$1 invested	\$2.10
Jobs supported	7,000

CONNECTICUT

Homes weatherized in 1999 (with DOE \$)	629
DOE funding in 1999	\$1.4 million
Clients served in 1999	1,701
Elderly	15%
People with disabilities	15%
Families with children	18%

Typical weatherization measures include installing insulation; tuning and repairing furnaces; sealing ducts; and mitigating heat loss through doors, windows, and other infiltration points. Clients are also educated on the proper use and maintenance of the installed measures.

Connecticut takes pride in its highly skilled and dedicated Weatherization Program staff. Weatherization crews provide comprehensive energy efficiency solutions and deliver these valuable services with a considerate approach and a commitment to quality.

HEALTH ALERT

Weatherization crews conduct energy-related health and safety tests while diagnosing efficiency problems. Crews test gas appliances and heating systems for the presence of carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless gas that can be deadly in large quantities. These tests often save lives.

During a routine inspection, a weatherization worker identified a serious health hazard for one elderly homeowner. The natural gas hot water heater was not venting properly and carbon monoxide was backdrafting into the home. The crew quickly vented the water heater and resolved the pressure imbalance. The client wrote to the agency, "If it had not been for your interest in correcting the problem, I still might be breathing in carbon monoxide. You are saving lives....bless you."

Another client sought help from Weatherization to pay her bills and received more than she expected. After retiring, Rita Leese* realized that she could not keep up with her escalating energy costs and she called the local weatherization agency for help. The weatherization crew conducted an energy audit and used the blower door to check for air infiltration and pressure imbalances. They discovered that the chimney was not properly venting and carbon monoxide fumes were spilling back into the home. With a little more investigation, the crew found a squirrel's nest that was blocking the air passage. In addition to installing weatherization measures, the crew cleaned the chimney and evicted the furry tenants. To Rita's delight, they relocated the squirrel family to a nearby tree. Rita remarked, "If ever you have questioned the importance of your work, think of this very grateful lady."



The gauge on the blower door indicates air infiltration.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Communities also benefit from weatherization work. Weatherization reduces energy costs for low-income families and helps them become more self-sufficient. This benefits the community by keeping dollars in the local economy that would typically be exported out to pay for energy. Every \$1

retained in the community produces an estimated \$3 in multiplier benefits.

Weatherization also creates jobs for energy professionals and materials suppliers.

Reducing residential energy demand decreases electricity generation and avoids emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, and other pollutants. This improves local air quality and reduces adverse health effects, particularly asthma. Weatherization measures also mitigate residential and power plant emissions of greenhouse gases.

Weatherization reduces annual carbon dioxide emissions by an average of one metric ton per weatherized home.

WEATHERIZATION WORKS!

Weatherization produces an impressive range of benefits for low-income households and communities. Nationally, for every \$1 invested in the program, Weatherization returns \$2.10 in energy-related benefits. Weatherization measures reduce national energy consumption and curb demand for imported oil. Weatherization works for Connecticut and America!

**Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the subjects.*



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, CONTACT:

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Visit the Weatherization Web site at: www.eren.doe.gov/buildings/weatherization_assistance
or call the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Clearinghouse at: 1-800-DOE-3732



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